

**Sermon Series: “When Heaven Invades Earth”—Lord of Life Lutheran, Westfield, IN—5/20/2007**

**Title: “I’m Back!”**

**Text: Acts 1: 6-11**

**Intro.: Ills.: Modern culture’s spin on 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming**

**Theme:** If Jesus returned today or this week, would we be surprised, annoyed, or ho-hum by his heralded coming or would we be motivated by his promised return to go out and invite the world to be a part of it.

*So when they met together, they asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Acts 1: 6-8*

**Things that distract us from carrying out our “great” commission from Jesus**

- The world’s mocking
  1. *“In the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, “Where is this coming he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation.” 2 Peter 3: 3-4*
  2. We love to be loved and hate to be associated with what appears to be unsuccessful—and Satan knows it!
    - a. **Ills.: Ben Franklin on the importance of diligence in small things**
  3. Listen to our Savior’s counsel and comfort to his beleaguered Church
  4. *“The day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar: the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming...in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness. 2 Peter 3: 10-13*
- Our lackluster view of faith and life witness
  1. We compartmentalize our life in the kingdom to what we do between these four walls
    - a. **Print and read Acts 1: 10-11**
    - b. The disciples like I-465 quawkers—paralyzed by the departed Savior and a humanly overwhelming task
    - c. Afraid of being accused of being a fanatic or stodgy, we become content with closet Christianity
  2. Listen to what Jesus says to his servants, awaiting his return
    - a. *“Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their food allowance at the proper time? It will be good for that servant whom the master finds doing so when he returns...From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.” Luke 12: 42-48*
    - b. **Ills.: Martin Luther’s perspective on Christ’s return**
- Our grief over loss
  1. We are stopped dead in our tracks and our literal and spiritual breath is sucked out of us by tragedy of life’s losses.
  2. *At that moment we cry out with the Psalmist David, “The waves of death swirled about me; the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me. The cords of the grave coil around me; the snares of death confronted me.” 2 Sam.22: 5-6*
  3. We have forgotten God’s promise bound up in Christ’s 2<sup>nd</sup> coming.
    - a. **Print and read 1 Thessalonians 4: 13-18**

**Encouraging words about Jesus’ departure and 2<sup>nd</sup> coming**

- Unless he went away the Spirit of empowering could not come
  1. **Print and read John 16: 7-11**
  2. Purposed to encourage and comfort us
  3. Purpose to convict and bring power-filled words & conduct of believers to a stubbornly unbelieving world

- Gone for a while to go and get our place in his heaven's kingdom ready
  1. **Print and read John 14: 2-3**
- Having left behind the scent of his kingdom life in our daily lives among the world.
  1. *"But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him. 2 Corinthians 2: 14*
  2. **Ills.: You wear his coat well**

### **Modern Culture's announcement of Second Coming**

How the news media would announce the end of the world:

**Sports Illustrated:** "Game's Over!"

**Ladies' Home Journal:** "Lose 10 Pounds by Judgment Day with Our New Armageddon Diet!"

**Inc. Magazine:** "Ten Ways You Can Profit from the Apocalypse."

**CNN:** "World Ends; Women and Children Most Affected."

**J. C. Penney's Catalog:** "Our Final Sale."

**America Online:** "System Temporarily Down. Try Calling Back in 15 Minutes."

*Paul Thigpen, quoted in Holy Hilarity: Inspirational Wit and Cartoons by Cal and Rose Samra (Waterbrook Press, 1999), p. 15; submitted by Kevin A. Miller, vice president, Christianity Today International*

### **Ben Franklin's "For Want of a Nail"**

For want of a nail the shoe was lost. For want of a shoe the horse was lost. For want of a horse the rider was lost. For want of a rider the battle was lost. For want of a battle the kingdom was lost. And all for the want of a horseshoe nail.

### **Martin Luther's Perspective on Christ's Final Return**

Even if I knew that the world would come to an end tomorrow, I would nevertheless plant an apple tree today. Let us live as though Christ were crucified, yesterday, risen today, and coming again tomorrow. **Martin Luther**

### **Your wear his coat well**

One day an evangelist by the name of Jakov arrived in a certain village. He commiserated with an elderly man named Cimmerman on the tragedies he had experienced and talked to him of the love of Christ. Cimmerman abruptly interrupted Jakov and told him that he wished to have nothing to do with Christianity. He reminded Jakov of the dreadful history of the church in his town, a history replete with plundering, exploiting, and indeed with killing innocent people. "My own nephew was killed by them," he said and angrily rebuffed any effort on Jakov's part to talk about Christ. "They wear those elaborate coats and crosses," he said, "signifying a heavenly commission, but their evil designs and lives I cannot ignore." Jakov, looking for an occasion to get Cimmerman to change his line of thinking, said, "Cimmerman, can I ask you a question? Suppose I were to steal your coat, put it on, and break into a bank. Suppose further that the police sighted me running in the distance but could not catch up with me. One clue, however, put them onto your track: they recognize your coat. What would you say to them if they came to your house and accused you of breaking into the bank?" "I would deny it," said Cimmerman. "'Ah, but we saw your coat,' they would say," retorted Jakov. This analogy quite annoyed Cimmerman, who ordered Jakov to leave his home. Jakov continued to return to the village periodically just to befriend Cimmerman, encourage him, and share the love of Christ with him. Finally one day Cimmerman asked, "How does one become a Christian?" Jakov taught him the simple steps of repentance for sin and of trust in the work of Jesus Christ and gently pointed him to the Shepherd of his soul. Cimmerman bent his knee on the soil with his head bowed and surrendered his life to Christ. As he rose to his feet, wiping his tears, he embraced Jakov and said, "Thank you for being in my life." And then he pointed to the heavens and whispered, "You wear His coat very well." **Ravi Zacharias, Can Man Live Without God? (Word, 1994); submitted by Van Morris, Mt. Washington, Kentucky**

**Acts 1:10-11**

They were staring into the sky as he departed. Suddenly, two men in white clothes stood near them. <sup>11</sup>They asked, "Why are you men from Galilee standing here looking at the sky? Jesus, who was taken from you to heaven, will come back in the same way that you saw him go to heaven." [GW]

**1 Thessalonians 4: 13-18**

Fellow believers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him...For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. So we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore, encourage each other with these words.

**John 16: 7-11**

Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.

**John 14: 2-3**

In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.